

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 /061 W

-----074128 161557Z /45

O 161410Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9877

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: DEMIREL HANGS ON

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL HAS APPARENTLY PERSUADED JUSTICE PARTY (JP) LEADERSHIP THAT HIS BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS NOT TO RESIGN AT THIS TIME. WHETHER HE BELIEVES HE CAN ACTUALLY
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REMAIN IN POWER OR WHETHER HE BELIEVES RESIGNATION AT THIS POINT WOULD BE PRECIPITATE AND POLITICALLY UNWISE IS NOT CLEAR.
END SUMMARY

2. JUSTICE PARTY (JP) LEADERSHIP MET FOR MORE THAN THREE HOURS EVENING OF DECEMBER 15 TO DISCUSS SITUATION FACING THE PARTY AND COALITION GOVERNMENT AS A RESULT OF DEFECTION OF NINE JP

DEPUTIES SINCE THE JUNE ELECTIONS. (EARLIER IN THE DAY DEPUTIES HILMI ISGUZAR AND CEMALETTIN INKAYA HAD, AS EARLIER RUMORED, ANNOUNCED THEIR RESIGNATIONS FROM THE PARTY) AFTER THAT MEETING, PARTY SPOKESMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN NURI BAYAR TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE LEADERSHIP HAD DISCUSSED THE SITUATION BUT HAD NOT CONSIDERED THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWING FROM THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THE STATUS OF THE RESIGNED DEPUTIES HAD NOT YET BEEN CLARIFIED.

3. VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS DECEMBER 16 REPORT THAT DURING THE MEETING PRIMIN DEMIREL ARGUED STRONGLY AGAINST WITHDRAWING FROM THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME. ACCORDING TO HURRIYET DEMIREL ALSO SAID THAT IN ORDER TO CONTINUE FUNCTIONING, THE GOVERNMENT NEEDED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARLIAMENT, AND THEREFORE IN THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO SEEK A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. ACCORDING TO MILLIYET, DEMIREL'S ATTITUDE WAS MORE DEFIANT SAYING THAT HE WOULD NOT LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT UNTIL THE OPPOSITION MANAGED TO GET 226 VOTES TO UNSEAT HIM.

4. DECEMBER 16 DEMIREL HELD AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING WITH HIS JP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AT 9:30 AM. AT 10, HE MET WITH HIS TWO COALITION PARTNERS, DEPPRIMINS ERBAKAN AND TURKES. AT 11, HE MADE HIS NORMAL WEEKLY CALL ON PRESIDENT KORUTURK. THIS SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LED TO SOME SPECULATION THAT, DESPITE PRESS REPORTS, DEMIREL MIGHT BE SUBMITTING HIS RESIGNATION DECEMBER 16. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. AFTER MEETING WITH KORUTURK DEMIREL SPOKE TO REPORTERS. HIS ATTITUDE WAS UNCOM-
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PROMISING. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO SERVE AND TO TRY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY. HE ADMITTED THAT RESIGNATION OF DEPUTIES FROM THE JP COULD HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE STATUS OF THE GOVERNMENT BUT THAT EFFECT WOULD NOT BE MEASURED YET. HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT CONSIDER THOSE RESIGNATIONS TO BE VALID UNTIL HE, AS PARTY CHAIRMAN, HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEMS WITH THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED.

5. COMMENT: DEMIREL AND HIS COALITION PARTNERS NOW THEORETICALLY CONTROL 220 SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. OPPONENTS OF DEMIREL'S

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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USEEC

GOVERNMENT NOW APPARENTLY CONTROL ENOUGH VOTES TO UNSEAT HIM IF THEY CAN WORK TOGETHER. IF DEMIREL CHOSE TO FIGHT--AS HE APPARENTLY HAS--THE PROCESS OF OVERTURNING THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE SOME TIME. AT LEAST THREE DEPUTIES FROM THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY ARE REPORTED TO BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND NOT EXPECTED TO RETRUN UNTIL DECEMBER 24. MOREOVER, THE STEADFASTNESS OF SOME OF THE INDEPENDENTS IN THEIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT CERTAIN. FINALLY, DEMIREL APPARENTLY HOPES THAT HIS ALMOST LEGENDARY PERSUASIVENESS AND POLITICAL SKILLS WILL ENABLE HIM TO KEEP OTHER WAIVERING JP DEPUTIES FROM DESIERTING THE PARTY AND PERHAPS NEUTRALIZE SOME OF THE DEFECTORS OR EVEN BRING THEM BACK INTO THE FOLD. AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT EXACTLY WHEN A SHOWDOWN MIGHT COME OR WHAT ITS RESULT MIGHT BE. WE KNOW THAT SOME SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE JP HAD HOPED TO BE ABLE TO PERSUADE DEMIREL TO RESIGN AND THUS AVOID THE DAMAGES THAT MIGHT RESULT FROM A LOSING BATTLE TO REMAIN IN POWER. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER DEMIREL REJECTED THEIR ADVICE BECAUSE

HE BELIEVES HE HAS A CHANCE OF TURNING THE SITUATION AROUND OR
IF HE SIMPLY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY UNWISE TO WITHDRAW AT
THIS STAGE. MEANWHILE, DESPITE DEMIREL'S ASSERTION THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT IS AT WORK TRYING TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY, THE
FACT IS THE ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT ITS FUNCTIONS IS
HANDICAPPED BY THE UNCERTAIN POLITICAL SITUATION.
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Status: NATIVE
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To: STATE
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